

**Rep. Slaughter Responds to BRAC Commission Decision to Save 107th Air National Guard Unit**

*August 28, 2005*

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Not too long ago, the BRAC commission came to Niagara to decide the future of this base, and really, of this entire community.

And when they came out, I am proud to say, so did all of you.

The Commissioners saw that we stand together as a community here in Niagara Falls.

They saw that the mission of this air base is one we all share... to protect this nation against all who would harm us.

They saw the value of our cause, and the critical strategic value of this base.

The BRAC Commission *came* and *saw* exactly what we are made of here in Niagara Falls....and as a result, *we conquered.*

After the vote, one of the BRAC Commissioners made it crystal clear exactly why we are able to stand here together today celebrating victory...

He reportedly said that the Commission could have made this decision "blindfolded," because this base, and our mission here, is just too important to Homeland Security.

And so we stand here today, shoulder to shoulder, victorious.

Not because of the work of any single person...or even the work of a few

...but because each and every one of us joined together under a common banner...And because the arguments we made... made darn good sense.

But none of that would have been possible without the brave men and women who serve at this base.

It is only because of their hard work, their service and sacrifice, their significant expertise and dedication to doing their jobs well that we were able to wage the fight we did.

I think it is incumbent upon all of us to remember that in most communities around this country where a military base was put on the closure list, they aren't celebrating today.

They aren't attending rallies...they are preparing to lose jobs.

It is a sad reality for many, and it serves to underscore just how important this victory is for us here in Niagara Falls.

If you'll recall, when this process began, we thought the deck was stacked against us.

There are over a thousand jobs here at NFARS and many thousands more which depend on this base for their survival.

Some folks have told me that we "sure got lucky" this round.

But I look out at all of you here today and I know that luck had nothing to do with it.

We are here today because together, as a united front, we proved the homeland security value of this base. We proved the strategic value of our mission.

And as a result, you saved those jobs and you have helped to ensure that the homeland security of our border region will not be compromised.

Make no mistake, all of you here today and all of the men and women who serve here earned this victory. It is yours and it is a testament to the fighting spirit of this community.

I am thankful for the privilege to fight along side each you in order to protect our base, and I am honored to be here with you today.

Thank you

